

Chairman Nofs:

Please find enclosed my recent letter to the editor published in the Huron Daily Tribune. Clean energy is a major economic driver in Michigan's Thumb—generating investment, saving money for residents and businesses, and driving down costs of renewables and efficiency technologies. In order to build on this success, we support increasing Michigan's renewable energy standard beyond 10 percent.

Sincerely,

Chad Gainor
Vice President, Harbor Beach Chamber of Commerce
Revolution Cafe (CEO)
Member, Chambers for Innovation and Clean Energy



Letter to the editor — August 8, 2015

Monday, August 10, 2015 3:03 pm | Updated: 1:31 pm, Tue Aug 11, 2015.

The future is clean

To the editor:

The earth used to be considered "flat," now we understand it is a large sphere with a molten metallic core that generates an electromagnetic field, which prevents Earth's organic matter from being cooked by radiation emitted from the large fireball that Earth revolves around. As we evolve, we learn more about how things work.

Energy is one of those things that has come a long way in a relatively short period of time. We've gone from digging coal out of the ground and burning it to putting solar panels on roofs to capture energy from sunlight and turbines in fields to harvest energy from wind. Yesterday, much of the energy we consumed stimulated the development of foreign economies, or even neighboring US states; today, the adoption of renewable energy technologies stimulates the development of Michigan's own economy. We are in the midst of a clean revolution; appliances are becoming more efficient, advanced energy technologies like the Tesla home battery are becoming commercially available — the list goes on. Go science!

As vice president of the Harbor Beach local chamber of commerce and a local entrepreneur, I know first-hand how important clean energy is for economic development. I see government as an intermediary between science and the market; as advancements are commercialized, government does what it can to facilitate their adoption. To date, the state's clean energy policy has generated nearly \$3 billion in private-sector investment, saved money for families and businesses, and driven down costs of renewables and efficiency technologies. We're just getting started; the future is clean.

This year, Michigan will meet its renewable portfolio standard by generating 10 percent of our energy with renewables. It would be really cool if we could all get on the same page and support the continued development of our renewable energy infrastructure and increase our target beyond 10 percent. Supporting the update of our energy policies presents an economic development opportunity for many rural counties across the state. Investing in efficient, renewable energy will build upon our manufacturing strength and skill, allow us to retool our factories, attract growing companies and jobs to Michigan, encourage innovation, and put Michigan workers back on the job. It will also help to protect our outdoor heritage, reduce pollution in our rivers, and reduce public health costs and suffering associated with pollution-related lung diseases; the list goes on.

States across the U.S. are recruiting technology companies and associated jobs to their region, in part by ensuring they meet the requirement to provide renewable energy. In a recent press release about a new Google data center, the president of the Tennessee Valley Authority, Bill Johnson, stated, "Google could have located their next data center anywhere in the world, but they chose a soon-to-be retired coal plant site with the right infrastructure in rural Alabama." The new data center will be powered with renewable energy. We have a decommissioned coal power plant in Harbor Beach, surrounded by wind farms; why can't we have a high-tech data center in the Thumb? This is one of many conversations that we should be having regarding opportunities for local economic development and technological advancement.

Local chambers of commerce and business owners should be focused on the financial and economic opportunities associated with Gov. Snyder's plan to revamp and modernize Michigan's energy policy to supply affordable, reliable, clean energy. As the governor works with the Legislature to develop the next steps in Michigan's energy future, we have a real opportunity to save money and grow our economy by engaging in this important conversation.

Chad Gainor

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